

COORDINATING MY BODY FOR PLAY AND ACTIVITIES

In order for us to be able to coordinate our bodies to carry out activities we need to have good core stability and the ability to have an idea of how we want to move, to plan how we are going to achieve that movement and then carry out the movement.

Core stability is the ability to control the movement and position of the central 'core' of the body which is responsible for posture and limb movement. This helps to maintain a good posture and gives a stable base to allow the arms, legs and head to move in a coordinated manner. It involves the muscles in the trunk, shoulders and hips.

Coordinating our bodies to carry out activities also involves the processing of essential information from all our sensory systems as well as integrating body awareness and perception of movement. See [Using my Senses](#) for more information about this.

What difficulties you may see

- Often tripping, falling or bumping into things
- Poor quality writing and scissor skills
- Difficulties with carrying out every day, self-care tasks such as dressing and using cutlery
- Difficulties learning new skills or carrying out an already mastered skill in a slightly different way, needing more practice than peers to learn these skills
- Difficulties copying motor movements.



Activity ideas

Activities to improve core stability can be incorporated into play. The following activity ideas will help improve the muscle strength in the shoulder, hips and trunk and therefore help improve core strength and stability.

Children should be supervised at all times whilst completing these activities. Choose a couple of activities each time to help prevent boredom and keep the activities interesting.

Acknowledge when the child tires but aim to gradually and continuously increase strength and endurance in small steps.

- Any activity on hands and knees e.g. skittles, ball games, board games such as Connect 4, Twister, obstacle courses.



- Any game in high kneeling e.g. throwing at a target, working at a low table.
- Body Wrestling - face a partner in half kneeling then place flat hands together and push against each other whilst keeping a good upright position. Then try and pull against each other.
- Carry out activities at eye level on a vertical surface, e.g. chalkboard easel, paper taped to a wall using big arm movements.
- Balloon volleyball/tennis - 2 people or teams in high kneeling pass a balloon over a net (if no net available just hit backward and forwards or tie a string up between two chairs instead of a net).
- Games involving animal walks such as races, 'duck, duck, goose', crab football:



Bear



Donkey kick



Dog or Cat



Crab

- Aeroplanes - lie on your tummy, initially raising your head off the ground, then arms, then legs until the only thing that is touching the floor is your tummy. Hold this position for 10 seconds if possible.
- Bridging - lie on your back, with your body in a straight line. Bend your knees up, whilst keeping your feet on the ground and keep your arms by your sides. Tip your pelvis backwards to flatten your lower back into the floor and then raise your bottom off the floor keeping your heels on the floor. Hold this position for 10 seconds if possible.
- When watching TV or reading encourage your child to lie on their tummy on the floor, with forearms flat on the floor (rather than supporting the chin) for as long as they can.
- Swimming - Including using a kickboard/float, doggy paddle, treading water etc.
- Encourage general active play, particularly in playgrounds and walking over uneven surfaces.



There are a number of programmes and websites that can also provide ideas of activities that can help develop core strength and stability such as SMART MOVES and BEAM as well as more commercial yoga and pilates programmes designed for children such as Cosmic Kids (www.cosmickids.com)

Strategies to help

- Identify a meaningful goal with the child and consider how realistic the goal is.
- Help the child to break down the task and help them to identify the steps needed to achieve it (ask what, when, where, why, how questions to help think about the task).
- Set small achievable targets/steps and plan a method for recording when these steps are completed e.g. placing a symbol card in a “done box” or ticking off a checklist.
- Give one instruction at a time and after one action is successfully completed, add another action (see [Backward chaining and MATCH](#) advice sheet).
- Use visuals and visual schedules e.g. photos of items to put in school bag at start of day.
- Help the child physically move through the action so they can experience the correct movement e.g. hand-over-hand guidance.
- Encourage the child to verbalise what they are doing while they are carrying out the activity.
- Use visual cues e.g. tape, carpet square, labels/shapes on a class table.
- Rehearse what the child has learned on a regular basis.
- Start with basic two step activities and gradually increase.
- Backward and forward chaining is a technique to help teach a task and to actively involve the child in the task. It involves breaking complicated activities into smaller steps. Visual prompts such as photographs and symbols can be used to help prompt the child at each step.

The NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde website has more ideas that you could explore

<https://www.nhs.uk/ggc/kids/life-skills/play-leisure/>